



NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
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Selected Operations Should Have Received Their Farm and Ranch Irrigation Surveys

For immediate release - To gather reliable information about irrigated land, the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is conducting the 2003 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey during January, February, and March 2004.

Approximately 25,000 of the Nation's irrigated farms and ranches are being asked to provide information on their irrigation practices, so every response is critical. Pumping capacity and usage data become extremely important and useful during any drought year.

"USDA has an obligation to provide reliable data on farm and ranch irrigation and this survey gives NASS the information necessary to do that," said Becky Cross, New Jersey State Statistician. Cross also stated that accurate and complete responses from farmers and ranchers will provide important information to help industry representatives, leaders, and planners chart the best course for the future of on-farm irrigation.

Farm and ranch operators selected to participate in this year's survey received a report form in late January 2004. "Every response is held strictly confidential by law (Title 7, U.S. Code)," said Becky Cross "and is used only in combination with all other responses to produce state and national summarized totals." Results from this irrigation survey are scheduled for release in the Fall of 2004. According to the 1998 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey, 50 million acres were irrigated in 1998, compared to 46 million acres irrigated in 1994. What will the picture reveal for 2003?

Producers selected to participate in this survey will make an important contribution to the U.S. agricultural community. This survey gives participants an opportunity to show how they use water responsibly to produce an abundant food supply for America. Results from this survey will be used to develop irrigation practices that improve productivity for producers, their families, and their communities.

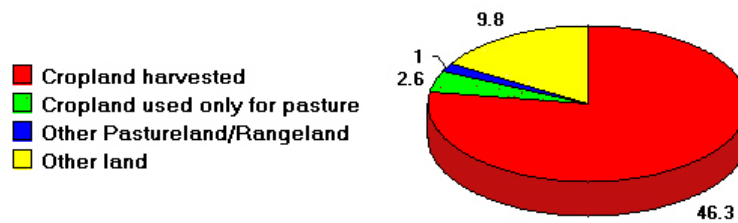
The 2003 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey is one way that NASS and producers work together to provide meaningful, accurate, and objective statistical information on irrigation.

All agricultural statistics published by NASS are available on this website at www.usda.gov/nass/. For information on this survey or other NASS reports, call 1-800-328-0179.

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Find agricultural statistics for your county, state, and the Nation at www.usda.gov/nass/.

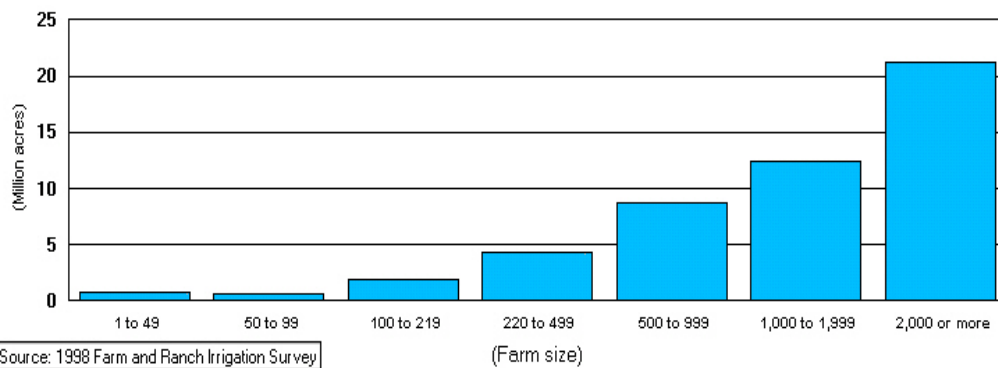
Land Use - Acres Irrigated (Million)



NOTE: Other Cropland equals less than 1 million acres, therefore is not shown on pie chart.

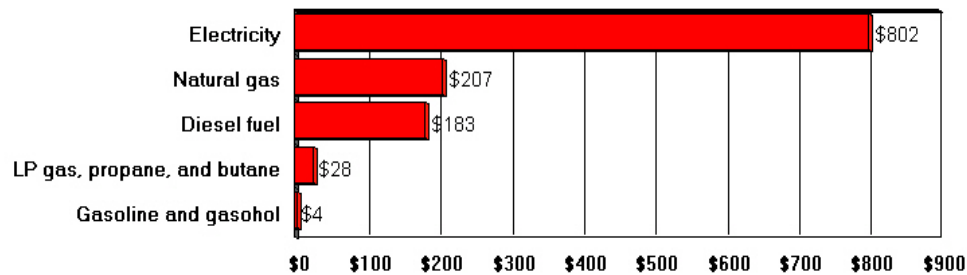
Source: 1998 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey

Irrigated Farms by Size



Source: 1998 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey

Energy Expense For On-Farm Pumping Of Irrigation Water (Millions)



Source: 1998 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey